

# Alden House

Wednesday, August 28, 2002

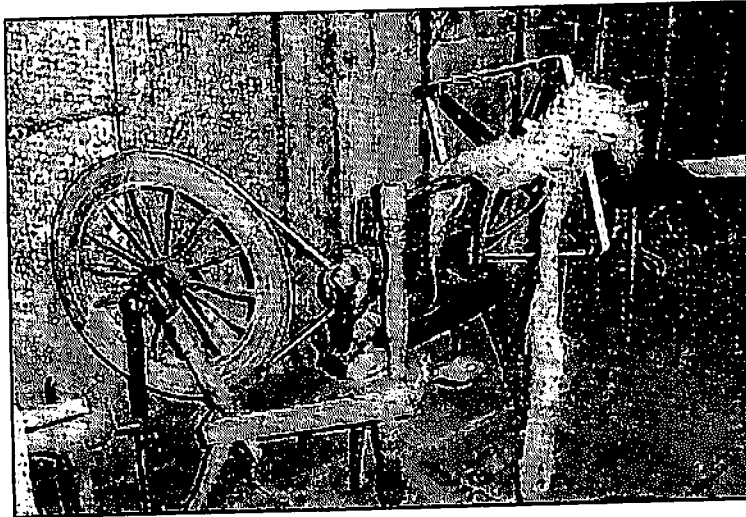
Duxbury Clipper

## A Woman's Work Was Never Done

The Alden House Museum is holding a week-long weaving demonstration. Barbara Itz of Hanover will be on hand to demonstrate Colonial-weaving techniques and answer questions about her craft. Items Barbara has made on her inkle loom are on sale in the Museum Shop.

Spinning and weaving were a way of life for generations of Alden women who lived in the Alden house and who raised their large families within this ancient home. These vital crafts, now quite unfamiliar to most of us today, were truly a way of life. Mothers with their daughters, as soon as the children were old enough, would spend countless hours, often well into the night, creating the clothing, bedding and other items essential to the household. In fact, any spare time was usually spent on the many tasks required to spin raw flax and unprocessed wool into the yarn that then were transferred to the hand looms to create cloth. For example, to convert the flax that resembles coarse straw into a finished linen bonnet or shirt required over 20 separate steps. Every farmstead had a flax field to provide the raw materials for this lengthy process.

The implements used in this process are on display in several rooms of the Alden house. In addition to familiar spinning



A flax loom in the Alden house

wheels, you will see other devices that were involved in the process. For example, just to wind and measure yarn, you'll find a niddy noddy, a swift and a weasel. When sufficient yarn was wound on the weasel, it would make a popping sound; hence the expression, 'pop goes the weasel.' Our guides are always on hand to tell you more about this aspect of Colonial life.

The Alden House is open throughout the summer and early fall, closing on Columbus Day. Escorted tours are available. Admission is \$4.00 for adults, \$3.00 for seniors and students and \$2.00 for children age 4 to 12. For further information call the during regular office hours - weekdays from 9am until 1pm. The phone number is (781) 934-9092.